This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

E
450
.H64

MASSACHUSETTS IN MOURNING.

A

SERMON,

14

PREACHED

IN WORCESTER, ON SUNDAY, JUNE 4, 1854.

BY

THOMAS WENTWORTH HIGGINSON,

Minister of the Worcester Free Church.

REPRINTED, BY REQUEST, FROM THE WORCESTER DAILY SPY.

BOSTON:
JAMES MUNROE AND COMPANY.
1854.

Hosted by Google

BOSTON:
PRESS OF PRENTISS AND SAWYER,
No. 19 Water Street.

Hosted by Google

SERMON.

Shall the iron break the Northern iron and the steel? — JEREMIAH XV. 12.

You have imagined my subject beforehand, for there is but one subject on which I could preach, or you could listen, to-day. Yet, how hard it is to say one word of that. You do not ask, at a funeral, that the bereaved mourners themselves should speak, but you call in one a little farther removed, to utter words of comfort, if comfort there be. But to-day is, or should be, to every congregation in Massachusetts, a day of funeral service — we are all mourners — and what is there for me to say?

Yet, even in this gloom, the faculty of wonder is left; as at funerals, men ask in a low tone, around the coffin, what was the disease that smote this fair form, and are we safe from the infection? So we now ask, what is lost, and how have we lost it, and what have we left? Is it all gone, (men say,) that old New England heroism and enthusiasm? Is there any disinterested love of Freedom left in Massachusetts? And then they think with joy, (as I do,) that, at least, Freedom did not die without a struggle, and that it took thousands of armed men to lay her in the grave at last.

175966

Hosted by Google

I am thankful for all this. Words are nothing — we have been surfeited with words for twenty years. I am thankful that this time there was action also ready for Freedom. God gave men bodies, to live and work in; the powers of those bodies are the first things to be consecrated to the Right. He gave us higher powers, also, for weapons, but, in using those, we must not forget to hold the lower ones also ready; else we miss our proper manly life on earth, and lay down our means of usefulness before we have outgrown them. "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's and unto God the things which are God's." Our souls and bodies are both God's, and resistance to tyrants is obedience to Him.

If you meet men whose souls are contaminated, and have time enough to work on them, you can deal with them by the weapons of the soul alone; but if men array brute force against Freedom — pistols, clubs, drilled soldiers, and stone walls — then the body also has its part to do in resistance. You must hold yourself above men, I own, yet not too far above to reach them.

I do not like even to think of taking life, only of giving it; but physical force that is forcible enough, acts without bloodshed. They say that with twenty more men at hand, that Friday night, at the Boston Court House, the Slave might have been rescued without even the death of that one man — who was perhaps killed by his frightened companions, then and there. So you see force may not mean bloodshed; and calm, irresistible force, in a good cause, becomes sublime. The strokes on the door of that Court House that night for instance — they may perchance have disturbed some dreamy saint from his meditations, (if dreamy saints abound in Court Square,) — but I think they went echoing from town to town,

Hosted by Google

from Boston to far New Orleans, like the first drum beat of the Revolution — and each reverberating throb was a blow upon the door of every Slave-prison of this guilty Republic.

That first faint throb of Liberty was a proud thing for Boston; Boston which was a scene so funereal a week after. Men say the act of one Friday helped prepare for the next; I am glad if it did. If the attack on the Court House had no greater effect than to send that Slave away under a guard of two thousand men, instead of two hundred, it was worth a dozen lives. If we are all Slaves indeed — if there is no law in Massachusetts except the telegraphic orders from Washington — if our own military are to be made Slave-catchers — if our Governor is a mere piece of State ceremony, permitted only to rise at a military dinner and thank his own soldiers for their readiness to shoot down his own constituents, without even the delay of a riot act — if Massachusetts is merely a conquered province and under martial law — *then I wish to know it*, and I am grateful for every additional gun and sabre that forces the truth deeper into our hearts. ***Lower, Massachusetts, lower, kneel still lower!*** Serve, Irish Marines! the kidnappers, your masters; down in the dust, citizen soldiery! before the Irish Marines, and for you, O Governor, a lower humility yet, and your homage must be paid, at second hand, before the stained and soiled "citizen soldiery."

I remember the great trades-procession in Boston, a few years since, in honor of the visitors from the North, from the free soil of Canada. Then all choice implements, which Massachusetts had invented to supply the industry of the world, were brought forth for exhibition, and superb was the show. This time we had visitors from the South — the South which uses tools also — and imports them all, "hoes, spades,

Hosted by Google

axes, politicians, and ministers." So the last new implements, for her use, were to be exhibited now. There were twenty-one specimens of Boston military companies. There were the two hundred more confidential bullies, for whom the city was ransacked, men so vile, that it was said the police had no duties left, for all the dangerous persons were employed as policemen themselves, — men whom a Police Judge having inspected, recognized criminal after criminal, who had been sentenced by himself to the House of Correction; these came next. Truly as there is joy in heaven over one sinner who repenteth, so there was joy in Boston that day, over one sinner who had not repented, — over every man in whom the powers of hell were strong enough, aided by public brandy, to fit him for that terrible service. Those were the tools marshalled forth for exhibition. But why were these only shown? Why were the finer, the more precious implements kept invisible that day, the real engines of that Slaveholder's triumph? Why not make the picture perfect? Place, O Chief Marshal, between the Slave and the guardian cannon, the crowning glory of that sad procession, the Slaveholder in his carriage, and chain, on the one side, the Mayor of Boston, and, on the other side, the Governor of the Commonwealth, with the motto, "The Representative Men of Massachusetts, — *These tools she gives, Virginia, to thee!*"

I mean no personality. The men who occupy these offices, are men who (I have always thought) did them honor. I suppose that neither would own a Slave, nor (personally) catch one. No doubt they favorably represent the average of Massachusetts men. ***But I introduce them for precisely this reason,*** to show the tragedy of our American institutions, that they take average Massachusetts men, put them into public office, and

Hosted by Google

then, demanding more of them than their education gives them manliness to meet, — use them, crush them, and drop them, into the dishonor with which these hitherto honored men are suddenly overwhelmed to-day.

If such be the influence of our national organization, what good do our efforts do? Our labor to reform the North, with the whole force of nationalized Slavery to resist, is like the effort of Sir John Franklin, on his first voyage, to get northward by travelling on the ice. He travelled toward the pole for six weeks, no doubt of that; but at the end of the time he was two hundred miles farther from it than when he started. The ice had floated southward — *and our ice floats southward also.* And so it will be, while this Union concentrates power in the hands of Slaveholders, and gives the North only commercial prosperity, the more thoroughly to enervate and destroy it.

Here, for instance, is the Nebraska Emigration Society; it is indeed, a noble enterprise, and I am proud that it owes its origin to a Worcester man — but where is the good of emigrating to Nebraska, if Nebraska is to be only a transplanted Massachusetts, and the original Massachusetts has been tried and found wanting? Will the stream rise higher than its source? Settle your Nebraska ten years, and you will have your New England harvest of corn and grain, more luxuriant in that virgin soil; — ah, but will not the other Massachusetts crop come also, of political demagogues and wire-pullers, and a sectarian religion, which will insure the passage of the greatest hypocrite to heaven, if he will join the right church before he goes? And give the emigrants twenty years more of prosperity, and then ask them, if you dare, to break law

Hosted by Google

and disturb order, and risk life, merely to save their State from the shame that has just blighted Massachusetts?

In view of these facts, what stands between us and a military despotism? "Sure guarantees," you say. So has every nation thought until its fall came. "The outward form of Roman institutions stood uninjured till long after Caligula had made his horse consul." What is your safeguard? Nothing but a parchment Constitution, which has been riddled through and through whenever it pleased the Slave Power; which has not been able to preserve to you the oldest privileges of Freedom — Habeas Corpus and Trial by Jury! Stranger still, that men should think to find a security in our material prosperity, and our career of foreign conquest, and our acquisition of gold mines, and forget that these have been precisely the symptoms which have prophesied the decline of every powerful commercial state — Rome, Carthage, Tyre, Venice, Spain, Holland, and all the rest.

In the third century after the birth of Jesus, Terullian painted that brilliant picture of the Roman power, which describes us, as if it were written for us:

"Certainly," says he, "the world becomes more and more our tributary; none of its secret recesses have remained inaccessible, all are known, frequented, and all have become the scene or the object of traffic. Who now dreads an unknown island? who trembles at a reef? our ships are sure to be met with everywhere — everywhere is a people, a state; everywhere is life. We crush the world beneath our weight — *onerosi sumus mundo.*"

And Rome perished, almost when the words were uttered!

How simple the acts of our tragedy may be! Let another Fugitive Slave case occur, and more blood be spilt (as might

Hosted by Google

happen another time ;) — let Massachusetts be declared insurrectionary, and placed under martial law, (as it might ;) — let the President be made Dictator, with absolute power ; let him send his willing Attorney General to buy up officers of militia, (which would be easy,) and frighten Officers of State, (which would be easier ;) — let him get half the press, and a quarter of the pulpits, to sustain his usurpation, under the name of "law and order" ; — let the flame spread from New England to New York, from New York to Ohio, from Ohio to Wisconsin ; — and how long would it take for some future Franklin Pierce to stand where Louis Napoleon stands now ? How much would the commercial leaders of the East resist, if an appeal were skilfully made to their pockets ? — or the political demagogues of the West, if an appeal were made to their ambition ? It seems inconceivable ! Certainly — so did the *coup d'etat* of Louis Napoleon, the day before it happened !

"Do not despair of the Republic," says some one, remembering the hopeful old Roman motto. But they had to despair of that one in the end,— and why not of this one also ? Why, when we were going on, step by step, as older Republics have done, should we expect to stop just as we reach the brink of Niagara ? The love of Liberty grows stronger every year, some think, in some places. Thirty years ago, it cost only $25 to restore a Fugitive Slave from Boston, and now it costs $100,000 ; — *but still the Slave is restored.* I know there are thousands of hearts which stand pledged to Liberty now, and these may save the State, in spite of her officials and her military ; but can they save the Nation ? They may give us disunion instead of despotism, but can they give us anything better ? Can they even give us anything so good ?

Hosted by Google

We talk of the Anti-Slavery sentiment as being stronger; but in spite of your Free Soil votes, your Uncle Tom's Cabin, and your New York Tribunes, here is the simple fact: *the South beats us more and more easily every time.* So chess-players, when they have once or twice overcome a weak antagonist, think it safe, next time, to give up to him a half dozen pieces by way of odds; — and after all gain the victory. Compare this Nebraska game with the previous ones. The Slave Power could afford to give us the Whig party on our side, this time — could give up to us the commercial influence of Boston and New York, so strong an ally before — it has not had the name and presence of Daniel Webster to help it now, nor the voices of clergymen, nor the terror of disunion, nor the weariness after a long Anti-Slavery excitement: it has dispensed with all these; — nay, the whole contest was on our own soil, to defend the poor little landmark we had retreated to long before; — and for all this, the Slave Power has conquered us, just as easily as it conquered us on Texas, Mexico, and the compromises of 1850.

No wonder that this excitement is turning Whigs and Democrats into Free Soilers, and Free Soilers into disunionists. But this is only the eddy, after all; the main current sets the wrong way. The nation is intoxicated and depraved. It takes all the things you count as influential, — all the "spirit of the age," and the "moral sentiment of Christendom," and the best eloquence and literature of the time, — to balance the demoralization of a single term of Presidential patronage. Give the offices of the nation to be controlled by the Slave Power, and I tell you that there is not one in ten, even of professed Anti-Slavery men, who can stand the fire in that furnace of sin; and there is not a plot so wicked

Hosted by Google

but it will have, like all its predecessors, a sufficient majority when the time comes.

Do you doubt this? Name, if you can, a victory of Freedom, or a defeat of the Slave Power, within twenty years, except on the right of petition, and even that was only a recovery of lost ground. Do you say, the politicians are false, but the people mark the men who betray them! True, they mark them, but as merchants mark goods, with the cost price, that they may raise the price a little, when they want to sell the same article again. You must go back to the original Missouri Compromise, if you wish to prove that even Massachusetts punishes traitors to Freedom, by any severer penalty than a seat on her Supreme Bench. For myself, I do not believe in these Anti-Slavery spasms of our people, for the same reason that Coleridge did not believe in ghosts, because I have seen too many of them myself. I remember when our Massachusetts delegation in Congress, signed a sort of threat that the State would withdraw from the Union if Texas came in, but it never happened. I remember the State Convention at Faneuil Hall in 1845, where the lion and the lamb lay down together, and George T. Curtis and John G. Whittier were Secretaries; and the Convention solemnly pronounced the annexation of Texas to be "the overthrow of the Constitution, the bond of the existing Union." I remember how one speaker boasted that if Texas was voted in by joint resolution, it might be voted out by the same. But somehow, we have never mustered that amount of resolution; and when I hear of State Street petitioning for the repeal of its own Fugitive Slave Law, I remember the lesson.

For myself, I do not expect to live to see that law repealed by the votes of politicians at Washington. It can only be

Hosted by Google

Hosted by Google